

15.558-1172
THE SPIRIT OF PAUL THE SPIRIT OF MISSIONS.

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SERMON,

PREACHED AT NEW HAVEN, (CON.)

BEFORE THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

FOR

FOREIGN MISSIONS,

AT THEIR

ANNUAL MEETING, SEPT. 15, 1814.

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BOSTON:

PRINTED BY SAMUEL T. ARMSTRONG,
No. 50, CORNHILL.

1814.

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SERMON.

EPHESIANS iii, 8.

UNTO ME, WHO AM LESS THAN THE LEAST OF ALL SAINTS,
IS THIS GRACE GIVEN, THAT I SHOULD PREACH AMONG
THE GENTILES THE UNSEARCHABLE RICHES OF CHRIST.

ST. PAUL was equally remarkable for the depth of his humility, and for the ardour of his zeal. From the first moment of his conversion to the latest period of his life, he seems never to have forgotten that he had been a persecutor of the name of Jesus. The remembrance of his former character laid him low before God, while it inspired him with an earnest desire to live worthy of the grace by which he had been DISTINGUISHED. Having himself tasted the riches of God's mercy in the pardon of sin and the hopes of eternal life, he wished to be the joyful minister of the same grace to others, and to carry the glad tidings of peace and salvation to the ends of the earth.

Fitted to this great work by many natural and spiritual qualifications, he engaged in it with an ardour, which no watchings and fastings, no labours and sufferings could overcome. From Jerusalem he passed into Syria, thence into Arabia—into Asia Minor—into Macedonia and other parts of Greece. Widely extended regions of the globe were traversed by him, sometimes on foot, sometimes alone, while continually exposed to the severest hardships and perils. Wherever he went, he was deemed an enthusiast,

or a mad-man, a disturber of the public peace, an enemy to mankind. "But none of these things moved him, neither counted he his life dear unto himself, if he might finish his course with joy, and the ministry which he had received of the Lord Jesus." He felt the importance of his mission, and the grandeur of his own destiny. He bore about the dying of the Lord Jesus; he carried with him the treasures of everlasting wisdom and mercy. Despising the gains and the glory of the present world, his heart was strongly fixed on procuring for himself and for others the blessings of eternal life.

God had especially designated him to this work, and declared him a "chosen vessel to bear his name before the Gentiles;" and though his labours were abundant, and his successes unrivalled; though multitudes in various portions of the heathen world were brought to the knowledge of the truth through his instrumentality; still his humility did not forsake him; he could retrace the labours and sufferings of a glorious life, without indulging in the emotions of pride and vanity; he could look upon the hundreds and thousands he had converted from paganism, and yet say, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ."

He did not doubt of his being a *saint*: but he felt himself to be *the least of all saints* because he had persecuted the church of God, and because he still lived so far beneath his privileges and obligations. That he should be called to preach the Gospel to the heathen, he considered as an instance of amazing condescension and mercy; and to this great and good work he made a cheerful and unreserved consecration of all his powers.

Where, my brethren, can we find an example more worthy of our imitation? Where can we learn so much of that *spirit*, which ought to breathe in all our hearts, while we are endeavouring to spread the knowledge of Christ in the pagan world? We behold in this man a missionary indeed; one who is borne above those worldly and selfish interests, which too often contract our minds and paralyze our exertions. We see him engaging in a service the most noble, the most arduous, and continuing in it through all difficulties and discouragements, with unabated resolution to the end. How happy would it be for us, could we light our fires at his altar, and feel something of that pure and heavenly flame which burned in his bosom.

It is intended in the following discourse to present to you more distinctly, some of the principles and motives which directed and animated the apostle in carrying the gospel to the heathen world, and which ought no less powerfully to direct and animate us.

1. I begin by observing, that the apostle entered upon this service with a deep impression of the infinite worth of the gospel. It was to him "*the unsearchable riches of Christ.*"

Time was when he was blind to the glory of a crucified Saviour, when Christ appeared to him as to his countrymen generally, "a root out of a dry ground," in which was to be seen neither "form nor comeliness." Nay, he felt a deep hostility to Christ, and persecuted his followers to prison and to death. But the Lord, even Jesus, had met him in the way, and had spoken to him with a voice of power and majesty, which he could no longer resist. A glorious light from heaven shone round about him, the emblem of a more glorious light, which shone into his soul, and which forever darkened the lustre of all terrestrial

things. Now the gospel of Christ appeared to him the “glorious gospel of the blessed God”—full of wisdom—full of mercy—full of power—forming a scheme in which all the divine attributes harmonize, and shine forth with unutterable splendour. His soul bows before the mysteries of a God incarnate—before the wonders of a Saviour crucified and raised again from the dead. The cross of Christ, a stumbling block before, is henceforth his boast and his glory. *There* his own guilty soul has found relief—*there* his foulest stains have been washed away. Was it surprising that his heart should be absorbed and even transported with such an object, and that he should feel it to be the glory of his life to unfold its riches and its beauty among the Gentiles? Especially when you reflect that he considered the knowledge of Christ and his cross as essential to their salvation. He did not believe that men were thronging the way to *heaven* involved in the ignorance and stained with the crimes of idolatry. He looked upon the whole heathen world, as without God, and without hope; sitting in the region of darkness and shadow of death; and he declares the object of his ministry to be “to turn many from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God.” Here was the spring of his zeal in preaching the gospel, in regions where “Christ was not known.”

If he had regarded the gospel merely in the light of a good religion, and on the whole perhaps the best religion in the world, you would not have seen him braving all dangers, and encountering every hardship, to spread the knowledge of its sacred truths among the nations. He would have left them, as many boasting philanthropists have done, to enjoy their superstitions, in the fond hope that they might find their way to the abodes of future happiness, though

undirected by the light of the gospel. But the fact with him was quite otherwise. He considered the gospel as an indispensable mean of eternal life—that they who heard it and believed, would be saved, and that they who heard it not, or did not believe, would inevitably perish.

Such impressions of the gospel prepared him to act as a missionary of the cross, and laid a foundation for his persevering endeavours to spread the knowledge of divine truth in every part of the world.

Our impressions of the gospel must be of the same character, if we would embark in the cause of missions with any hope of success. If we have yet to learn, that the gospel of Christ is the *glorious gospel of the blessed God*, exhibiting a bright assemblage of all the divine perfections, and containing in its provisions all that is requisite to make us happy through time and eternity, we know nothing yet as we ought to know, and are not prepared so much as to begin our work. May I not say indeed, that unless we are firmly persuaded that the gospel is the only appointed means of salvation, and that men will perish who die without its light, we shall never do any thing in the cause of missions worthy of its object. It is a question, therefore, which deeply concerns us all, “Have we right impressions of the gospel? Does it appear to us, as it did to St. Paul, to be the *unsearchable riches of Christ*? Has the glory of this world faded away in comparison of its excellence? and can we say with the apostle, that we count all things as loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus our Lord?” Then shall we compassionate the heathen, who are without this knowledge; and be ready to perform any labours, or to make any sacrifices, which are necessary, to spread the knowledge of Christ among them.

This will lead me to remark,

II. That the apostle entered upon the great work of evangelizing the heathen, with the strongest convictions of duty. He had no doubt that he was called of God to preach the gospel to the Gentiles. The divine Saviour had "stood by him in a vision at Jerusalem, and bid him depart out of Judea, because they would not receive his testimony, saying, I will send thee far hence among the Gentiles." His conviction was complete, his obedience prompt and exemplary. He waited for no human counsels—for no combination of human strength. "As soon as it pleased God to reveal his Son in him, that he should preach him among the heathen, immediately he conferred not with flesh and blood; neither went he up to Jerusalem to them that were apostles before him; but he went into Arabia and returned again to Damascus." The *single* circumstance, that Jesus Christ had commanded, was *enough*. This was paramount to every other consideration. Mountains of difficulty were instantly removed, or totally disregarded. Armed only with the word of truth and the power of the Holy Ghost, he sallied forth into the heathen world, prepared to contend with *ignorance*, with *superstition*, with the *pride of philosophy*, the *madness of ambition*, the *hatred and violence of lust*: in short, with all that a corrupted world, instigated by the subtlety and malice of Satan, could array against him. We do not propose him as our example, in all these respects, and without any limitation; for as his commission was *extraordinary* and *special*, so also was the path in which he was led. But we desire you to bear it distinctly in mind, that it was under a strong conviction of duty, that he commenced his arduous work; and that it was this, which kept him firm and steady in

his course, while at all times it supplied him with the testimony of a good conscience, and enabled him cheerfully to commit the event of his labours to God.

There is at least an equal necessity, that we should act under a strong sense of duty, in attempting to establish the gospel among the heathen. For if we lack conviction on this point, our exertions will be *feeble, unsteady*, and probably of *short duration*. How, then, let me ask, ought this question to be viewed by us? Is there any room to doubt whether we are called to bear a part in the attempts, which are now making among Christian nations, to send the gospel to the benighted pagans?

We know it was the command of the risen Saviour to his disciples, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature;" but from the nature of the case, it is manifest that this command could not be restricted to the disciples to whom it was first given. *Here* was a work too mighty to be performed by a few persons in one generation. We must consider the command as resting upon the apostles and upon their successors in the ministry of reconciliation, as is farther evident from the promise annexed to it. "Lo! I am with you always, even to the end of the world;" a promise reaching to every age of the church, and showing us that the command, which is necessarily co-extensive with the promise, will never cease to be obligatory, until all men are brought to the knowledge of the truth, or until the ministry of reconciliation ends.

Besides, is it not our duty to pray for the salvation of all men, and that because "God will have all men to be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth?" But what sincerity can there be in our prayers, where there is not a corresponding endeavour to promote the

object which they contemplate? Can any man deceive himself with the idea, that he longs for the salvation of the heathen, and prays acceptably for that object, while he is unwilling to put his hands to the work of missions, and while perhaps he cheapens the labours of those who do?

Where indeed is the great law of benevolence, which binds us to regard the interests of our fellow men no less than our own; and their spiritual and immortal interests certainly as well as their temporal. Is he chargeable with the want of Christian charity who "seeth his brother have need of this world's goods, and shutteth up the bowels of his compassion from him;" what shall be said of one, who can look upon the perishing heathen, lying under a load of guilt, and hastening, without the knowledge or benefit of a Saviour, to the retributions of eternity, and yet feel no generous sentiment glowing in his bosom; no desire to carry the precious light of salvation to their benighted land?

'True, it may be said; but then it must not be forgotten, that though the call for our benevolence is great, yet the field for our active labours is limited. We must not desert our own churches to carry the gospel to heathen lands:—We must not neglect our own flesh and blood, the people in our new and scattered settlements, for the sake of transporting missionaries to distant shores: where, before any reasonable hopes of success can be entertained, new languages must be acquired, long and inveterate habits overcome.'

We are not backward, my brethren, to admit, that the call for domestic missions is loud and solemn. There are thousands in our frontier settlements, as well as in the more interior parts of our country, whose case demands our sympathy and exertion; not to mention the unhappy and degraded people of colour in the

southern states, amounting to scarcely less than a million of souls, and the numerous and wretched tribes of Indians upon our borders. To all these it is our duty to turn our attention, and to feel towards them that compassion which Jesus felt for the multitudes in Judea, who were as sheep scattered abroad having no shepherd. But is this the whole of our duty? May we not, and ought we not, to engage in foreign missions also, and send the gospel to the benighted regions of Asia and Africa, and to the Islands of the southern ocean? As to our own people, though destitute, they are not absolutely without the word of life, and the means of salvation. They enjoy a kind of twilight, by means of the scattered beams of the Sun of righteousness, which still fall upon them. But with the heathen it is total darkness. There is no day spring from on high to visit them; no feeble ray from any distant star to shine upon their dwellings. An awful night of gloom and terrouir surrounds them. Satan, the prince of darkness, holds there a wide and dreadful reign. Thousands and tens of thousands are yearly offered up as polluted and bloody victims upon his altars, while millions added to millions are enslaved by the false religions and cruel rites of this destroyer of souls. Behold! from the southern shores of India and Africa to the northern boundaries of Tartary—from the eastern to the western limits of Asia—and what will you see, but one vast assemblage of ignorance and superstition, casting a thick and portentous darkness over these widely extended regions! With the exception of a small portion of Christians, making less perhaps than one fiftieth part of the whole, all, all are without hope, and without God in the world. What a vast multitude of souls crowding their way, generation after generation, down to the abodes of despair!

What a deep and broad river do they make as they pass along to the ocean of eternity into which they fall—never to return. Where is thy philanthropy, O Christian? Where thy charity, kindled at the cross of a dying Saviour? Canst thou sleep quietly over the destiny of millions thus sunk in darkness and sin, without one effort to rescue them from the horrors of their condition, without so much as visiting their borders with the word of God, the light of life in thy hands?

Besides, have we not apostolic example for the course we recommend? Did the first ministers of Jesus wait till they had converted all their own countrymen, before they ventured abroad among the heathen? and when they went to one nation, did they confine their labours to them, till all were brought to the obedience of faith? Did they not rather go from city to city, and from one nation and kingdom to another, till they had planted the gospel in every part of the known world? This was St. Paul's plan, most certainly. And why should not this course be thought reasonable. An earnest desire to send the gospel abroad will kindle a purer and more ardent zeal for its propagation at home. "Religion is that kind of commodity, that the more you impart of it to others, the more you have left behind." Nor is this difficult to comprehend. The zeal, awakened by so glowing an object as a foreign mission, cannot fail to diffuse itself through many hearts, and be re-produced in the concern which it excites for the promotion of religion generally. It presents an interest, which is vast: it forms characters in a high degree dignified and engaging.

I appeal to the noble and apostolic spirit of those who have gone from our shores to carry the gos-

pel to India, and whose recent communications sufficiently evince that neither their zeal nor their firmness have been diminished. by the many trials they have endured. I appeal to the memoirs of one who breathed out her life on a distant shore, in the very morning of her days, and upon the threshold of her mission. She did not regret that she had left all for Christ, and that she had testified her love to the heathen rather by what she desired, than by what she was permitted to accomplish. Her life and death, strongly marked as they were by sentiments of the most exalted piety, will excite more Christian feeling, and be productive of more devout and ardent prayer for the extension of the Redeemer's kingdom, than the lives and deaths of a hundred ordinary Christians. Besides all this, a foreign mission has a powerful tendency to narrow the differences and destroy the little jealousies, which exist among Christians, while it enables them to act with union and vigour in one great cause.

What has been the *fact* among those Christians, who have embarked in foreign missions, both in Europe and America? Have they not been the friends of domestic missions also? So far as the knowledge of the speaker has extended, the more liberally they have communicated to the wants of the heathen the more generous have been their contributions, and the more zealous their labours, to promote religion in their own land. The truth is, those men who are for sending the gospel to the miserable inhabitants of Asia and Africa, at almost any hazard and expense, think a great deal of religion. It is to them "the power of God unto salvation." They regard it as the riches of the world, and their own eternal inheritance. They partake of the spirit of the primitive disciples, who sold their worldly possessions; that they might the

more effectually communicate to the wants of the necessitous, and help forward the rising cause of Christianity.

Can it be a matter of doubt, in these circumstances, whether we ought to cast in our lot with them, and do what in us lies, to spread the knowledge of Christ among the benighted nations? I see not how we can forbear, without being chargeable with the blood of the poor heathen who shall perish through our neglect. They are suffering an awful famine, not of bread nor of water, but of the word of the living God; and if we will neither compassionate nor relieve them, how can we avoid the guilt of their blood? A thorough conviction of this fact would lay hold of the strongest principles of action, and carry us resolutely and steadily forward in the great work which we have begun.

III. I remark further, that the apostle engaged in the design of propagating the gospel among the heathen, not merely from a sense of duty, acting under the command of Jesus Christ his rightful Lord and sovereign, but *as an unspeakable honour and privilege*. "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints is *this grace given*, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." He felt himself exalted by the office, which he sustained as a preacher among the heathen, his pre-eminent talents and gifts notwithstanding. It never entered his heart that his uncommon powers of mind, and his extensive acquaintance with human science, placed him beyond the humble occupation of a missionary to the pagans. This is the more remarkable, when you look at the circumstances under which his ministry was exercised. What was his ministry, brethren! Not like that which falls to many of the ambassadors of peace in later times, *where* every desire is anticipated—*where*

honour instead of reproach is the reward of talents and virtue. His was a ministry of suffering and want, of shame and dishonour. He was called to go through evil report, as well as good report; to be held as a deceiver and impostor while he was honestly labouring for the best interests of mankind. He could tell of journeyings often, of fastings often, of hungering and thirst, of cold and nakedness; of *perils* in the wilderness, of perils in the sea—of perils by his own countrymen; of perils by the heathen, of perils among false brethren; and yet he never complained that his sacrifices were great or his work humiliating. Amidst all this scene of labour and suffering, he felt himself an unspeakable debtor to divine grace, that he “was allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel,” and to preach its saving truths among the heathen.

Such a spirit my brethren, must we possess, if we would labour successfully in the missionary cause. If it be the impulse of reason, or conscience, only that we feel, we shall lack an essential part of the apostle’s temper. If we have not indeed such exalted views of the gospel itself—such a love to the Lord Jesus Christ, its glorious author, and such a tender concern for the salvation of the heathen, as to make us feel it to be an honour and privilege to put our hands to this work, in however humble a manner, we shall do nothing worthy of the cause: we shall only give another proof to the world, how little we believe our own religion, and how little its benevolent spirit has been transfused into our hearts. But where is the man that has himself tasted the love of a dying Saviour, who does not feel it to be a privilege to unite with him in seeking the salvation of a lost world? Where is the man that has found a place of safety for his own soul, who

does not burn with a holy zeal to point his perishing fellow mortals to the same refuge?

It is a privilege of no mean character to become the benefactors of others, in things pertaining to this life. All who have made the experiment have found that even here, "it is more blessed to give than to receive." How honourable then the employment, how noble the privilege, to contribute to the eternal happiness of our fellow beings—to become co-workers with God in the matter of their salvation; to be instruments of rearing eternal monuments of praise to him in a future world?

We celebrate the benevolence of a man, who exposes his life to save another from a watery grave; or who visits the dungeon to find the objects of his compassion, and to administer relief to the lonely sufferer, dying of want or disease. But how much more exalted his charity, who forsakes his kindred and his native land forever, to explore distant and inhospitable regions in quest of sinners, immersed in ignorance and superstition, and wallowing in the mire of sensuality: *his charity*, who is willing to undergo every hardship, and to sustain every trial, in erecting the banners of the cross among the benighted heathen.

To take the least share in this work, whether by our counsels or our prayers, or if it be only by contributing a humble pittance to the support of those who are more immediately and actively engaged, is an honour worth living for, and for which every good man will be thankful through eternity.

IV. Shall I observe in the fourth place, that though St. Paul esteemed it his highest honour to be instrumental in spreading the gospel among the heathen, yet he did not seek his own glory in this work.

It was not for the purpose of approving himself to his best friends, and much less for the sake of transmitting his name with honour to posterity, that he embarked in an undertaking so full of peril, and fraught with interests of such amazing magnitude. "Neither of men sought we glory," says he to the Corinthians, "nor yet of you. We preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake." This was a strong and distinctive feature in his character, as a missionary of the cross. This imparted to him a firmness and elevation of mind, which rendered him superior to corruption and versatility. His pole star being neither human vanity nor pride, but the glory of God and the salvation of men, he was kept steady to his purpose, through all changes and trials. God approved of his sincerity, and rewarded it with the most striking and visible success.

With the same holy and disinterested spirit, we also may hope to stand approved; and that God will not suffer our labors to be in vain. But if for the humble purpose of treading in the steps of others, and according in our opinions and practice with the fashion of the times; if we seek only to make a figure in our day and generation, unmoved by compassion for the heathen, and a concern for the Divine glory, God will say, "Put your burnt offerings to your sacrifices, I have no delight in them."

Is this remark *unseasonable*? We cannot doubt that extensive missions among the heathen have been undertaken, and many sacrifices made, for the narrow purpose of adding to the number and splendour of a particular church; or perhaps with the more selfish design of adding a wreath to the crown of individual

talent and exertion. But God abhors these sordid and earth-born motives. Can we hope, that he will bless us, and bring us into the goodly land, unless he delight in us? Will he delight in us, unless we delight in his cause, abstracted from our own private views and interests? He is a God of love, and has made a spirit of disinterested affection the spring of all acceptable duty. It is this alone which can elevate us to the purity and dignity of the ancient churches, and give us a zeal for the spread of the gospel, sincere and permanent as theirs. A zeal founded upon any other principle, will draw its motives chiefly from this world; and though it may burn high for a season, and astonish many by its brightness and vehemence, it is still like the meteor, which shoots suddenly across the sky, and terminates in darkness. That zeal which shall burn with a clear and lasting flame, must be kindled at the altar of pure and holy love.

V. Finally, let us not overlook St. Paul's firm and constant reliance upon God.

He was zealous and laborious—but he did not expect to convert the world by his own power. His endowments indeed were of the highest order, both natural and acquired. To these were superadded such miraculous gifts, as not to leave him “a whit behind the very chief of the apostles.” Yet with all these advantages, he was disposed to say, “He that planteth, and he that watereth is nothing, but God that giveth the increase.” His reliance for success was upon the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, in his convincing and sanctifying operations. Why else did he pray so fervently for a blessing upon his labours, and so constantly solicit the prayers of his brethren?

This part of his example is particularly worthy of our regard. The cause of missions is eminently the cause of God. He only can give it success. To the agency of his Spirit we must ascribe it, that any are brought to the saving knowledge of the truth in Christian lands, where the doctrines of the gospel are the creed of men's early years. But among the heathen, where the obstacles to divine truth are multiplied and various, what can we look for without the special agency of the holy Spirit?

I know indeed there are some, who, even with this agency, so long as it falls short of miraculous gifts, imagine that we have but a discouraging prospect of converting the heathen; and they attribute the want of success among missionaries in modern times to the absence of miraculous powers. We shall certainly not allege that such powers would be of no consequence to the missionary of Christ; but we may safely affirm that they are not necessary. They were all important in laying the foundations of Christianity; but having once existed, and a faithful record of them been transmitted to our times, it is sufficient now to refer to them, whether for the conviction of those who are born under the light of the gospel, or of those to whom the knowledge of it is now to be imparted.

This is not mere theory, brethren. What is the state of facts? Have no nations been converted to Christianity since the age of miracles ceased? When did the ancient Franks and Germans receive the gospel? When the Swedes and Danes, and other northern nations? These, with the greater part of our own ancestors, were heathens long since miraculous powers were known in the church. What shall we say of the Moravian missionaries in Greenland and Labra-

dor? of Swartz and his coadjutors among the natives of Indostan? Was it the power of working miracles, which gave to their labours such visible and triumphant success? Had Vanderkemp this power in converting the wandering and ignorant Hottentots? or Eliot, or Mayhew, or Brainerd, in the success which accompanied their labours among the Indians of our own country? They saw those tawny tribes moved under the preaching of the gospel, as the trees of the wood are moved with a mighty wind. They saw hundreds eagerly embracing the word of life, not because that word was confirmed by mighty signs and wonders and gifts of a miraculous kind, but because the Spirit of God was poured upon them in his enlightening, convincing, and sanctifying power. What has been, my brethren, may be again.

Besides, if the heathen are ever to receive the gospel by what means is their conversion to be effected? We have no reason to expect that the age of miracles will return. The word of God, made quick and powerful by the agency of the Holy Spirit, will be found abundantly sufficient to accomplish this work. When God's time is fully come for gathering in the heathen, every obstacle to the spread of the gospel will be removed; his word will be preached to all nations; his Spirit will be poured upon all flesh; and "the knowledge of the Lord will fill the earth as the waters cover the sea." Then "will be destroyed the face of the covering cast over all people, and the vail that is spread over the nations." Then "the mountain of the Lord's house will be exalted above the hills, and all nations flow unto it."

In the mean time, let us do our duty, if it be only to prepare the way for this glorious era of the church of

God. But whatever we undertake, let our eyes be steadfastly turned to the Lord, and let all our expectations be from him; let us *look*, and *wait* and *pray* for the out pouring of the Holy Spirit. There is danger, brethren, that we shall overlook this almighty Agent, so essential both to our fidelity and success; or at least that we shall not give him that place, in our plans and operations, which his high and sacred office demands.

To avoid this danger, and to stir us up to a vigorous discharge of our duty, let us set the apostle's example fully before us, and make it a part of our daily prayer that we may deeply imbibe his spirit. He loved the gospel, and felt extensively its transforming power. He considered it not merely his duty, but his highest honour and privilege, to preach its unsearchable riches among the Gentiles. Yet he did not seek his own honour and advantage in this service, nor rely upon his own wisdom and strength for success. God's glory was his last end; and in the Divine power and mercy he confided to make his labours beneficial to the heathen. Could we possess his spirit in all things, how much would it prepare us for the work in which we are engaged; and what happy consequences might we not expect to follow.

There would then be no want of missionaries. Men would rise up in every part of the country like Brainerd—like Vanderkemp—prepared to leave their friends and all that the world holds dear, to carry the gospel to the wandering savages in both hemispheres, or to plant it among the more civilized, but equally benighted tribes of the earth.

There would be no want of pecuniary means. Men who have consecrated themselves would consecrate

their substance to the Lord. If sparing from the luxuries of life would not be found sufficient, they would spare from its ordinary comforts, and sooner endure the severest privations than that the heathen should want for the bread and water of life. The spirit of Paul would make us offer more willingly for this object, than the ancient Israelites did to build their tabernacle, when it became necessary to restrain their liberality by saying, "It is enough." Of all charities this would appear the most *noble*, the most *heavenly*; and men would be anxious to lend to the Lord, and to lay up in store a good foundation against the time to come.

Had we the spirit of Paul, the spirit of missions would not languish, nor its object fail for want of *constant, fervent, and believing* prayer. Day and night should we remember the poor heathen, and those who have gone forth to break the bread of life to them. Never could we think of the light and privileges we enjoy, without feeling the tenderest compassion for those who sit in darkness, and sending up strong and fervent cries to heaven in their behalf. And why, my dear brethren, should we not possess this spirit? Is it not heaven-born? Is it not godlike? Does it not comport with our character and profession as Christians? Will it not impart a sweet and heavenly peace to our own bosoms? Has it not a rich and eternal reward? No object can be conceived more sublime; none more important: it involves in it *the glory of God through his Son, and the eternal salvation of millions*—an object which should at all times greatly interest us, but which the events of the present times powerfully press upon our attention. God, we know, has promised to give his Son "the heathen for his in-

heritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for his possession." The time appears at hand, when the promise shall be carried into complete effect. What mean these mighty revolutions among the nations these last twenty years—this *turning* and *overturning*, in which the hand of God is so visible, as to fill the world with astonishment? Do they not tell us, He is near whose right it is to reign? What mean these movements in the church, both in Europe and America? These missionary societies, and Bible societies, which unite so great a portion of the intelligence and zeal of Christendom? The church has awaked from the sleep of centuries; she is turning her believing eye in every direction, and seems resolved to plant the standard of the cross in every land. I need not tell you, brethren, what has already been done among the heathen; that Christian missionary establishments have recently been formed in India, in Africa, and in the islands of the Southern Ocean, besides several among the natives of our own country; that translations of the holy Scriptures have been made and are making, in very many of the Asiatic languages, spoken perhaps, by not less than five hundred millions of people. More than fifty missionaries are now actually labouring in pagan lands. Others are preparing to join them; men of piety, men of talent. Thousands, who have not seen each other's faces in the flesh, and who are of different religious communities, are united in this benevolent and glorious design.

Is this a time to sit still? Do we not already see the dawn of the millennial day? Do we not hear, or seem to hear, the accents of that song, which shall yet resound from every shore, "*Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee?*"

But we have our discouragements. Besides those which arise from distance of country, unhealthiness of climate, the moral state of the heathen, and, in some cases, their malignant and hostile feelings towards Christians, we have *war* in our own country, and war too of the most distressing character. Two Christian nations, most forward in spreading the benign religion of Jesus, have drawn their swords against each other. This, we must acknowledge, is a painful state of things: but though painful it ought neither to overwhelm nor discourage us. Jesus Christ, the great Head of the church, still holds the sceptre in his hands. He may permit great confusion and distress among the nations; but he will not, for a single moment, lose sight of his own kingdom, nor of those who befriend it.

Let our eyes and hopes be turned to him; and let us doubt neither his power nor his mercy, while we pray that the dark cloud which overshadows us may be withdrawn, and the joyful period arrive, when "Ephraim shall no longer vex Judah, nor Judah vex Ephraim;" but when wars shall cease to the ends of the earth, and all nations shall be embosomed in the same church, their King one and their name one.

I cannot close this discourse without inviting you all to co-operate with us in sending the gospel to the heathen. We ask your counsels—we ask your prayers—we solicit your liberality. Here is a cause in which all may embark, high and low, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. Here the widow's mite will be accepted; and if given out of love to the poor heathen, will be honourably mentioned in the great and last day. Now you have an opportunity of doing something to spread the glory of Christ's name,

and extend the means of salvation to your perishing fellow sinners. Now you have an opportunity of showing your love to *Him* who died for you, and the regard which you have both to his authority and example. He had compassion upon this lost world—and hesitated not to lay down his life for its redemption.—Dwells there a like compassion in your bosoms? His holy and omniscient eye is present to *see*, and his recording angel to write down the fact. Give, my dear brethren, as God hath prospered you; and be not afraid to give bountifully, for God will reward you in proportion to your liberality. But before you give, fix your eyes on those vast multitudes for whom your charity is solicited—those millions who are sitting in the region of darkness and the shadow of death; all made of one blood—all descending with you from the same guilty parent; all by nature children of wrath—all hastening to the bar of judgment. Soon their probationary state will close;—soon they will sink from your sight—and from beyond the reach of your compassion. But Oh! you will see them again; you will see them at the judgment seat of Christ—you will see them *arraigned—tried—and sentenced* to eternal rewards or punishments. What joy will it be to you, should you then behold some redeemed sinner rescued by your seasonable and **PIOUS LIBERALITY** from the horrors of everlasting death, and made heir of an inconceivable, and eternal weight of glory! *Be it some African—be it some Hindoo—be it some tawny savage* from the wilderness—the joy will be equal—it is a soul saved from death, through your instrumentality. How precious will that pittance appear, which was devoted to so glorious a cause, and which has returned to you with so rich a harvest.

Ardently will you wish that one half of your estates had been employed in this work of charity. "For now they that are wise will shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness," however humble the means, "as the stars for ever and ever."

I leave you, dear brethren, to your own reflections; praying that your charities may be such as God and your own consciences shall approve; and that whatever may be the event of your liberality as to others, it may be a treasure laid up in heaven for you, which the Divine Saviour shall graciously disclose in the presence of men and angels at his coming. AMEN.

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